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Leroy Garrett, Editor

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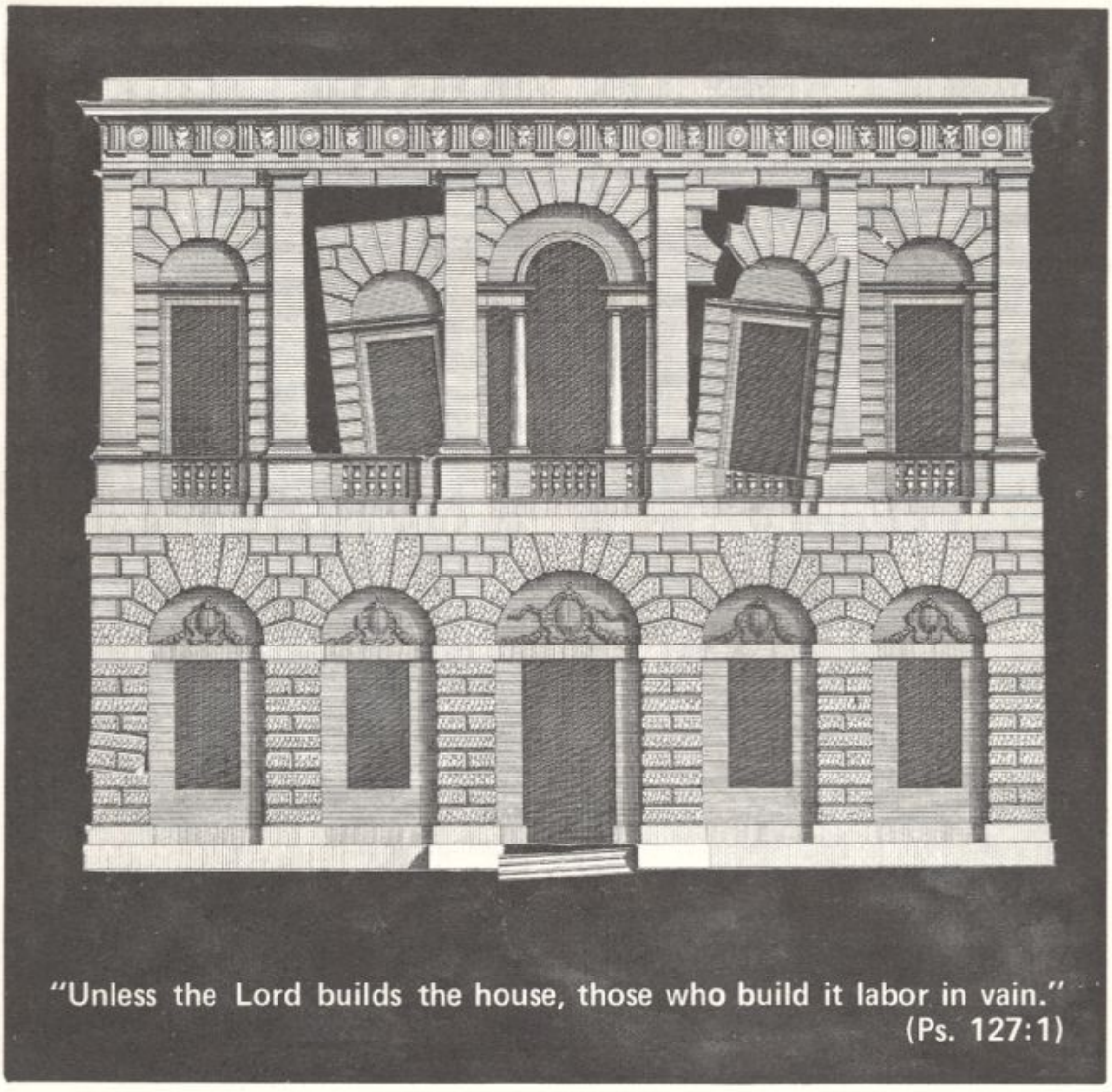

"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."
(Ps. 127:1)

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The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today . . .

PEACE OR ENMITY

The point of this essay is that because of Jesus we have a choice that man never had without him. Either we have that peace that only he can give, or we are left with that enmity that goes with any effort to keep law. Peace and enmity are thus opposites, somewhat like grace and law. The law stood as enmity between Jew and Gentile in that the Jews would not accept others except on the basis of law. Jesus removed this enmity (law) as the basis of union, thus making Jew and Gentile one. Whatever we place between ourselves and others as a basis for unity, except Jesus himself (peace), thus becomes enmity (law). Until this is removed by the love of Jesus unity is not possible. This is the theme we propose to develop.

This is Paul's argument in Eph. 2:14-16: "For he is himself our peace. Gentiles and Jews, he has made the two one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them; for he annulled the law with its rules and regulations, so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace. This was his purpose, to reconcile the two in a single body to God through the cross, on which he killed the enmity."

Jesus' intention is that the enmity that keeps men from being brothers be removed, yea even destroyed. This he did by giving himself on the cross, which no one else could have done. He did not kill the law or even end it, for Paul could still refer to it as holy and good and useful. And Jesus himself said that his mission was to *fulfill* the law, not destroy it. But he did destroy the enmity that was related to the law. That is, men were looking to the law not only for justification, but as the basis for accepting others as God's children. So the Gentiles were rejected because they were without law.

The law of course could not be kept, and so it was *weak* (Ro. 8:2) in that it could not bring one into fellowship with God. It helped to discipline a nation and it served as a tutor to bring men to Christ (Gal. 3:24), but it could never save for the simple reason that man could not fulfill all its demands. This is true of *any* law that man might look to for either peace or fellowship. Paul's argument in Ro. 2 is that the Gentiles, who were without the law, did indeed have moral or natural law, to which they were obligated. And so they too were sinners in that they could not keep moral law any better than the Jews could keep revealed law. Man must have help. God does not save man simply by giving him laws, due to man's sinful nature. God must give Himself. He must give a Helper. This is why He gave the gospel, man's "way out" thus becoming a Person rather than dogmas.

This is the case with any rule, dogma, doctrine, creed, or opinion that I place between you and me as a basis of acceptance. Whether it be a dietary rule or sabbath regulation, as the Jews liked to do, or whether it be a method of doing missionary work or a particular interpretation of prophecy, it is made a law or condition upon which I base fellowship. God's people can never keep such laws, for there is no end to them. With every sect demanding that all others yield to its own decrees there can never be peace, for this erects the same kind of wall of partition that Jesus came to remove. Law, whether given by God or whether of our own making (supposing them to be God's), can never be any thing but enmity, separating men who should be together as brothers.

So Paul contends in Col. 2:14: "He has canceled the bond which pledged us to the decrees of the law. It stood against us, but he has set it aside, nailing it to the cross." The bond is the handwritten decree of debt. It records our obligation to the law and tells of its demands upon us. It is against us in that there is no way for us to pay it on our own. God sent a Person to cancel the debt for us and to deliver us from it. It is *this* that he abolished, the death-demanding decrees of the law, and not the law *per se.* Jesus met the demands of the law, thus fulfilling it, and so abolishing a debt that would have spelled our doom. That was the enmity that he removed, and this he could do because he is God's peace.

The enmity that Jesus removed was not therefore simply a feeling of malice that existed between Jew and Gentile, though the term sometimes has that force. It is true that the Jews thought of Gentiles as dogs and would have no association with them, and the Gentiles had their prejudices too. But this is not what the apostle has in mind when he says: "He has broken down the enmity which stood as a dividing wall between them." The enmity, which stood like a fence, was law. This Jesus removed; that is, he removed it as the ground for fellowship or as the basis for unity. His peace, and only that, became the basis of unity and fellowship. Never would the two peoples have become "one new man" on the basis of either Jewish law or natural law.

Enmity remains the problem in our time. Not that we always hate our brothers with whom we differ, but because we allow law to stand as a fence between us, laws of our own creation or laws that we assume to be of God that we erect as conditions for unity and fellowship. A brother may harbor no ill will toward another; he may even love him. But if he does not accept him and become one with him in the Lord until he serves the Supper in a manner that conforms to his own idea, then there is *enmity* between them. It is likened to a partition or a fence. The enmity will remain so long as some dogma is made a condition of acceptance, for even if one conforms to the other and crosses to his side, the fence remains, separating them from all others who disagree on that point.

Jesus killed that enmity on the cross. Eph. 2:16 says he did. This means that he forever removed the law as the basis either of peace with God or fellowship between men. Even if I should be able to conform to your law, the two of us would not likely be able to conform

to the laws of others, or we might have trouble lining up all the others on our side. The scene is familiar enough, with all of our sects demanding conformity to their own unique standards. Thank God that there is a way out! If we so will it, all such enmity ends on the cross for each one of us. When I declare myself free of all debts to the law because of what Jesus did for me, and when I affirm my liberation from all the creeds of men as the basis of fellowship, then I can be "one new man" with all those that lay claim only to that peace that Jesus gives. The choice is ours. We can spend our days in enmity, parroting some party line and talking about "the faithful church," and die no better off than we began, thus missing the whole point of Jesus' purpose on the cross. Or we can make Jesus our peace, allowing him to free us of our sectism, and thus make nothing a basis of unity and fellowship that God has not made a condition of sonship.

Peace is so beautiful. The ancient Greeks used the same word that the Spirit later employed, but they never thought of it as a relationship between men or even gods. It was no more than an interlude in the everlasting state of war. Or it was that apathy or state of mind produced by Stoic philosophy. The idea of peace being a person was never dreamed of, and we might wonder if even the modern church is not closer to the Greeks than to Paul in its view of peace. Peace is ours, not by what we do, but what we allow to be done for us. Peace is not ours by keeping laws and ordinances but by yielding to a Person.

With the term *shalom* the Jews moved much closer to the meaning of peace, though they hardly saw it as personal. It meant well-being, with a strong emphasis on the material side, and so the greeting *Shalom!* meant something like "to your good health." But such gifts as health and wealth, which meant peace to them, were from God. And so God not only prospered man but saved him from tragedy. Amidst announced disasters God assures king Josiah: "I will gather you to your forefathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace (shalom); you will not live to see all the disaster which I am bringing upon this place" (2 Chron. 34:28).

The Spirit makes much more of peace in the New Covenant scriptures. While it is still a greeting, embracing all the Jews would have meant, it is now a fruit of the indwelling Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and the whole of the Christian mission is described as "the way of peace" (Lk. 1:79). "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men" thus became the intention of the gospel. It is noteworthy that Melchizedek, a priestly type of the Messiah, should be called "the king of peace" (Heb. 7:2). We do well to remember that our Lord is not only the head of the Body, but also the King of Peace, and of course the Prince of Peace. The church should thus be a haven of peace as much or more than anything else. It is unthinkable that God's children should be oppressed not unlike that of Egyptian bondage while under the domain of the King of Peace.

There is something very special about the peace that Jesus gives: “Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest, and banish your fears” (In. 14:27). It was this peace that the risen Christ spoke of in appearing to the apostles: “Late Sunday evening, when the disciples were together behind locked doors, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. ‘Peace be with you!”he said, and then showed them his hands and his side” (Jn. 20:19). The text says they were filled with joy at seeing the Lord. Again he blessed them with “Peace be with you!”, and then he breathed on them, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Joy, peace, and the Holy Spirit are the heart of this great text, and Paul is satisfied to say that these form the substance of what God’s reign in men’s lives is all about: “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace, and joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). It is in this context that he urges us “Let us therefore cease judging one another.”

It is not to overstate the case to say, therefore, that we are given the Holy Spirit that we might have peace. In giving us peace the Spirit is really giving us Jesus, and it is this that shatters the enmity and takes away the fences of separation. He is our peace, and that peace reaches out to those “who are far off and those who are nigh.” Never would Jews and Gentiles become one had they waited for all the theological tangles to be unraveled. Nor did they debate their way to unity. Nor was it a matter of who would “give up” what. It was a matter of Jesus taking away enmity and replacing it with himself.

That word enmity, *echthros* in the Greek, is one that really stands up and walks. It primarily refers to the disposition of the heart, such as *hatred* and *hostility.* In Gal. 5:20 it is listed as a work of the flesh, translated *enmity* or *hatred.* Ro. 8:7 says that the carnal mind is *enmity* against God, and the same word is used in Jas. 4:4 in explaining that friendship with the world is enmity with God.

So the law is enmity in that it lacks the power to unite man to man or to reconcile man to God. It is a fence that must come down. How gracious is that truth that “he has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall,” thus making it possible for us all to be brothers.

Surely Jesus did not take away one fence and then turn right around and authorize the erection of still more fences. He has given us the only ground for oneness: peace, which we have in his own Person through the indwelling Spirit. It is as men accept Jesus as the Lord of their lives that they become brothers and thus constitute the new humanity.

The church today must see that it only creates enmity when it makes any opinion or personal interpretation into a law. What is required for fellowship is clearly and distinctly stated in the scriptures. Paul answers the question of the basis of oneness by listing the seven unities of Eph. 4. In requiring others to conform to our dogmas, nearly always drawn from the silence of scripture, we are no less guilty than were those Jews who

rejected the Gentiles over their law. Surely we have the right to our opinions, as does any congregation, but not to the point of making them tests of fellowship.

The choice is ours, peace or enmity. We can go on with our sectarian foolishness of trying to will each other over to our own faction, and thus remain separated on the ground that we only are right. Or we can allow Jesus to remove the enmity by removing the laws that we have made into partitions.

He is our peace, not our dogmas. How tragic that in missing his peace we have gone to pieces. It need not continue so. His peace will teach us that we can accept each other in love with all our hangups, just as he accepted us with all our hangups.—*the Editor*

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OUR HISTORY SPEAKS TO OUR TIME

It is noteworthy that our Movement, which was launched as an effort "to unite the Christians in all the sects," found its origin in men's concern for partyism and division as reflected in sectarian attitudes toward the Lord's Supper. Both Thomas and Alexander Campbell had experiences with the Lord's Supper that turned them in a new direction in their quest for truth. It is also remarkable that our Movement at its source, in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, found its origin in a Holy Spirit revival Had it not been for that great revival, where as many as 25,000 gathered for spiritual renewal, Barton W. Stone and his fellow Presbyterian ministers would never have begun their reformatory efforts.

It is this particular history that I now recount, allowing it to speak to our time. It is interesting to most of us that our Movement should emerge out of the drama of the Lord's Supper, but it appears to be disconcerting for some to realize that we trace our origin to a Holy Spirit revival, especially those who, like those that Paul met at Ephesus, wonder if there be such a thing as the Holy Spirit. Yet it is most appropriate that a Movement devoted to unity and fellowship should trace its beginnings to a concern for the communion of the Lord's Supper and the communion of the Holy Spirit, for these are the greatest expressions of both the *source* of unity and the *continual sharing* of fellowship. Unity is, after all, "the unity of the Spirit," and it is only as that Holy Guest dwells in our hearts, producing his love, joy and peace, that we are made one. And it is in the Supper that we sit with Jesus and with each other in the most glorious celebration of oneness. "When we bless 'the cup of blessing' is it not a means of sharing in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread, is it not a means of sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16).

It was providential for Alexander Campbell, and perhaps for us, that a wreck at sea delayed his voyage from Ireland to America to join his father, who had come to the New World to find a home for his family and a freer ministry for himself as a Presbyterian clergyman. The delay made it possible not only for Alexander to spend a year at Glasgow University, which left its mark upon his educational philosophy, but also to become acquainted with such restoration-minded people as Robert and James Haldane and Greville Ewing. These men were disenchanted with the sectarian religion that had brought the lovely isle of Scotland to a very low ebb spiritually. They launched efforts to evangelize the land, in opposition to the clergy. They called for more freedom and individuality in religious thought and a greater reliance upon the scriptures apart from human creeds. They sought to restore the priesthood of all believers through lay-preaching and mutual ministry, and they devoted themselves to reforming the church in doctrine, worship and organization. The high point came when James Haldane informed his congregation, now independent of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, that he could no longer conscientiously baptize children, and was himself immersed.

As a college student Alexander found himself handling the problem of a decadent, sectarian religion somewhat like our youth of today do. He attended his own Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterian Church, a strict sect that had broken away from the church that had broken away from the Scottish Presbyterians, on Sunday mornings, but would then steal away to hear Greville Ewing in the evenings, and to sit with him in rap sessions far into the night. In all these experiences the thing that influenced Alexander the most was that the clergy opposed any effort to reform the church. The preachers were content with their sectarian stance, and it was clear that they wanted no one, including the Haldanes and the Ewings, interfering with their ecclesiasticism. This not only caused the youthful Campbell to grow doubtful of authoritarian religious structures, but also to become suspicious of the clergy as a God-ordained system within the church.

It was at about this time, when Alexander Campbell was 21 years old, that the Seceder Presbyterians in Glasgow were to have their annual communion. To qualify for this he had to go before the session and pass an examination, for he had come from Ireland and was not a part of the local fellowship. Passing the examination, he was given a metal token, which everyone wishing to commune had to obtain. It was with an unsettled mind and with serious doubts about his relationship as an exclusive sect that Alexander Campbell, with token in hand, set out to partake of the Lord’s Supper. His doubts were compounded by the fact that he realized that other Christians he had come to love and respect for their spirituality, such as Greville Ewing, would not be allowed to break bread with his people. They would have to have a metal token, such as Alexander clutched in his hand, to prove their acceptance by this particular sect. Young Campbell could see that the Supper, surely intended for all God’s children, was prostituted for the sake of sectarian bigotry.

But loyalty to his parents' church bore down upon him, as well as his own, desire to conform as much as possible to the practices of his own tradition. So there he stood before the nine tables set up to serve the 800 people that had gathered. Doubts held him back, so he stepped aside and allowed others to file by, waiting for the last table, hoping that by then he could step out with good conscience. But the moment of truth had to come when the usher passed before him with the plate upon which he was to drop his token and then proceed to the table. And at that moment Alexander Campbell made a decision that was not only to change his life, but to ignite the fires of a Movement that would eventually sweep like a prairie fire on the American frontier and to affect the history of Christianity for centuries.

He tossed the token into the plate, and, refusing to partake of the Supper when spread upon the table of sectarian partyism, he walked out as a free man in Jesus Christ. Robert Richardson, his physician and biographer, writing of this watershed in Campbell's life, says: "It was at this moment that the struggle in his mind was completed, and the ring of the token, falling upon the plate, announced the instant at which he renounced Presbyterianism forever — the leaden voucher becoming thus a token not of communion but of separation." And we might add that the clink of that coin marks one of the beginnings of what we now know as the Restoration Movement in the United States.

About this same time Thomas Campbell was having a similar experience on the American frontier. Arriving in this country in 1807, he submitted himself for ministerial service to his own sect of Presbyterians, who were already on record for prohibiting "occasional communion" with other Christians, including other Presbyterians. Already weary of the divisions in his own land, Thomas was doomed to disappointment in his hope that conditions would be better in America. He soon learned that in his ministrations along the far-flung frontier of western Pennsylvania that he was to have fellowship only with Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterians. There were of course Methodists, Baptists, and other kinds of Presbyterians on his circuit, all of whom he was expected to ignore in favor of his own kind. But he hardly had the heart for this kind of exclusiveness, and so he invited all those who professed faith, not only to his meetings but to the Lord's Supper as well, and it was this that got him into trouble.

Not unlike our own day, Thomas soon came under the suspicions of his fellow ministers. His soundness in the faith was questioned. They looked askance at his friendship with other believers, insisting that he should be as exclusive as themselves.

On one journey into northwestern Pennsylvania, Thomas was impressed with the large number of other kinds of Presbyterians that attended his meetings, and he was touched by the fact that they seldom had the opportunity to break bread with other Christians. So on this occasion he invited them to the fellowship, bemoaning the fact that divisions have cruelly kept God's people separated. A fellow minister, traveling with Campbell, was

shocked that other Presbyterians would be included and proceeded to report this to the presbytery. The news of his heresy spread rapidly among the Anti-Burghers, and it was not long until other preachers refused to work with him. Charged before the presbytery for holding that confessions of faith were nothing more than human authority, he fell under a judgment that was eventually to separate him from the Presbyterians as much as his son was back in Scotland.

Before leaving the church of his youth, which his sensitive soul could do only with great reluctance, he read a statement to the synod in which he gave expression to some of those principles that inspired the Restoration Movement, something akin to the "Here I Stand" speech of Martin Luther.

"It is therefore because I have no confidence, either in my own infallibility, or in that of others, that I absolutely refuse, as inadmissable and schismatic, the introduction of human opinions and human inventions into the worship and faith of the church."

As to the accusations made against him, he said: "For what error or immorality ought I to be rejected, except it be that I refuse to acknowledge as obligatory upon myself, or to impose upon others, anything as of Divine Obligation, for which I cannot produce a 'Thus saith the Lord'?"

He closed his remarks by assuring them that he sincerely desired union with them even though they could not agree with his willingness to share fellowship with those humble Christian brethren who were different from himself. But this was not to be. Tensions forced him to leave and to work independently of any denomination.

Thomas Campbell was now 46 and alone in a new land, his church having rejected him and his family delayed in Europe because of a shipwreck. But God blesses his children who are besieged by angry men with new friends, and they soon discover that they have more brothers and sisters than they realize. Such was the case with Mr. Campbell, for God gave him so many new friends and brethren that he launched an effort "to unite the Christians in all the sects." His plea became *the union of the divided church on the basis of the Bible.* Barred from churches, he took his plea to homes and barns, and his summer meetings were held out of doors under the trees. Large numbers came to hear his cry for the oneness of the church and the unity of all believers. He deplored partisan divisions, called for a faith and practice based upon the Bible alone, and encouraged Christians to cooperate with each other.

Interestingly enough, Campbell was not opposing the creeds as such. He himself was still a staunch Calvinist and still believed virtually everything in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Indeed, he once insisted that "I'll be a Calvinist to my dying day." It was making a creed the basis of fellowship that he objected to. Any man, or any church, can have its opinions, he granted, and these may be stated in creedal form; but such

opinions cannot be imposed upon others or required of them as acceptance into the family of God.

Out of his labors was formed the Christian Association of Washington in 1809, a loose organization that had no intention of becoming a church, the aim of which was to encourage unity and fellowship among all believers. It was in the first gathering of this association that Thomas Campbell made that now famous statement, “Where the scriptures speak, we speak; and where the scriptures are silent, we are silent.” Upon hearing that summary of Mr. Campbell’s views, one brother spoke up and said, “If we adopt *that* as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism.” This was followed by animated discussion. Finally Campbell said, “Of course, if infant baptism be not found in scripture, we can have nothing to do with it.” And so the Restoration Movement was off the ground. This association evolved into the Brush Run Church, our first congregation in the Campbell wing of the Movement.

It was during this time that Thomas Campbell wrote the *Declaration and Address,* which has become our magna charta for Christian liberty. It was here that he zeroed in on the right of private judgment: “It is high time for us not only to think, but also to act, for ourselves; to see with our own eyes, and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the Divine Standard,” and he insisted that we are bound to the scriptures, to them alone, and not to any human interpretation of them.

And he surely spoke for us all when he wrote, “Tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit, we would desire to be at rest; and, were it possible, we would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches, as would restore unity, peace, and purity, to the whole church of God.”

We, too, with aching hearts look upon a brotherhood splintered and fissioned by sectarian bigotry and long for that love and forbearance that make men one. We, too, are tired and sick of the whole sordid mess that makes our churches rivals of each other and keeps devoted brothers in Christ separated from each other. Each of us should here and now, in the spirit of Thomas Campbell, resolve that we will henceforth belong to no man’s party, and that we will accept as our brothers all those that God accepts as His children.

In this great document Campbell sets forth some principles that will help us in that resolve.

1. He recognized that divisions are nearly always over matters that the Bible says nothing about: “Our differences, at most, are about the things in which the kingdom of God does not consist, that is, about matters of private opinion, or human invention.”

2. He points to the necessary unity of the church, recognizing that we must honor that oneness despite our differences: “The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess

their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else, as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.

3. He shows that unity is much more than cooperation, for it involves receiving one another even as Christ has received us: “Although the church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ Jesus hath also received them to the glory of God.” There we have our answer. If we will only receive each other, with all our hangups and foibles, just as Jesus has received us, with all our hangups and foibles. If Jesus receives us even when we are wrong, we ought to receive one another even when we are wrong.

4. He lays down the only possible basis of fellowship in insisting that we can make nothing a condition of acceptance that is not expressly stated in the Word of God: “Nothing can be required as a term of communion but what is expressly taught and enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles upon the New Testament church, either in express terms or by approved precedent.”

When Alexander Campbell read this document the principles set forth thrilled his heart, but he had doubts about one point, the phrase just read: *either in express terms or approved precedent.* To base fellowship upon what is *expressly stated* in scripture was safe enough, Alexander agreed, but he took exception to the other, for there would always be disagreement as to what is an approved precedent and what is not. And so he saw fellowship based only upon what is clearly stated in the scriptures, and not by what we might like to tag “an approved example”.

And I agree with Alexander Campbell. To make it even clearer, I take the position that unity and fellowship are based only upon what is clearly and distinctly set forth as a command of God. Only commands are binding, not examples. Examples are binding only when they illustrate some command. I repeat: only commands of God *can be made tests of fellowship; examples are binding only as they reflect God’s commands.*

Several years before all this happened with the Campbells, Barton W. Stone down in Kentucky had started a unity movement all of his own, and we have said that it was born amidst the fires of a Holy Spirit revival. Stone himself writes of this great revival that reaped thousands of converts, including many hardened sinners that he believed could be touched only by God’s grace through the Holy Spirit. And he says, “Many things transpired there, which were so much like miracles, that if they were not, they had the same effects as miracles on infidels and unbelievers; for many of them by these were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, and bowed in submission to him.”

It was this revival spirit that fired the heart of Barton Stone to be a reformer. He and four other Presbyterian ministers resolved to renounce the sectarian spirit and be Christians only, directed solely by the authority of the scriptures. Soon the congregations they served, now separated from Presbyterianism formed a unity effort that began to reach out far and wide. They at first created their own presbytery, but decided that even this did not bespeak the simplicity of the New Testament order, and so resolved "that this body die and be dissolved and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling." So they wrote in *The' Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery,* another significant document in our great heritage.

These leaders of the Stone movement were still unimmersed, as were the Campbells in the first years of their work. Once convinced by their own study that they should be immersed, they tried to get some Baptist ministers to immerse them, but they would do so only if they would become Baptists. But these men, now calling themselves simply "Christians," explained that they had already left one sect and that nothing would be gained by joining another. They resolved their problem by immersing one another. And, again in another part of the world, the Restoration Movement was off the ground.

These two movements for unity and reform, one in Virginia under the Campbells and one in Kentucky under Stone (and later Raccoon John Smith and John T. Johnson) did not even know of one another for several years. They finally began to hear of one another and to cross each other's paths, and came to realize that they had a great deal in common.

By 1829 the Stone group, the oldest of the two, had about 10,000 followers, while the Campbells had some 8,000 that had rallied to their efforts. Through the influence of Stone, Johnson, and Smith, along with John Rogers, these two groups began contacts and conversations that were to lead to their union, which proved to be the first union between two churches in the history of ecumenicity. Our brethren of yesteryear have thus set us an example of what a divided people can do. This union was not based on uniformity of opinion or doctrine, and it cannot ever be so based, for people are going to see things differently as surely as they are different in physical appearance, emotional makeup, and intellectual capacity. At this time they did not even agree on baptism for the Stones still omitted it from their preaching and did not then accept it as being for the remission of sins. Still they effected the union because they were together immersed believers and accepted Jesus as the Lord of their lives and looked only to his Word for their direction.

That was a great day in our history when Barton Stone and Raccoon Smith could stand together before that audience and talk about uniting their forces, "Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights, or Old lights, or any other kind of lights," Raccoon said to a gathering made up of the likes of Jacob Creath and Philip Fall, men who had suffered much for their faith. But let us come to the Bible and to the Bible

alone, as the only book in creation which can give us all the Light we need! Let us stand together united in the Church of Christ as his disciples and as Christians only'" he added.

Shouts of *Amen!* and *Hallelujah!* and *Praise the Lord!* Folk began shaking hands and embracing as brothers. And then someone started that great hymn, and it soon filled the house as if it symbolized the Spirit's presence.

All hail the power of Jesus' name
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown him Lord of all

Raccoon pondered afterward that perhaps the perfect church had been realized, on Jan. 1,1832. His wise wife Nancy reminded him that perfection is mighty hard to come by and that somehow we never quite make it.

But it was the beginning of the beginning.

Let us in our generation not fail the great heritage bequeathed us. Let us make sure that we at least bring our people to the end of the beginning.—*presented by the Editor to the First Annual Mid-Gulf Unity Forum, Proctor Street Church of Christ, Port Arthur, Texas, March* 31, 1974.

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Notes From a Travel Diary . . .

BACK TO MISSISSIPPI

In view of what happened on my recent venture into the Bayou state ("The Professor and His Poodle," *Restoration Review*, December, 1973), one might suppose that it would do just as well to stay away. But when Enos Moore wrote me of his exciting fellowship with a black church in Grenada and invited me to share in this, I could not resist the temptation. There was something about that story - a white man ministering to an all-Negro congregation *in Mississippi*— that intrigued me. I wanted to look in on it for myself, for I too have had some exciting experiences in a black world.

Not having seen the Moores before, finding each other at the Memphis airport was easier than could be expected. And this is one of the great delights of my busy life: meeting new brothers and sisters in the Lord. I presented Eva, a dear sister that I came to love and appreciate greatly, with a lovely pink rose in bud. As it blossomed in fragrance and beauty over the next three days it symbolized our growing friendship. I now number

Enos and Eva Moore among my dearest friends, and I greatly admire them for their labor of love and their work of faith.

They both work, but are looking forward to retiring in a few years; and with their children all grown and married they are going to have lots of fun romping with their grandchildren over their large spread in Mississippi hill country. It is really something to walk in those hills with old Enos, amidst the tall timber of a dozen different kinds of trees, and talk about the Lord. We stood at the highest point in the county and viewed the great Grenada reservoir in the distance, with the longest man-made dam in the world. Below our feet was a remnant of a Confederate fort, one of the many monuments in the area to that ghastly war in which brother killed brother in the name of liberation. And there I stood with a white man who has cast his lot with a black community, ministering in the name of the Prince of Peace in the very heart of Dixie. The presence of the then and now warmed my heart, and because of this sense of history the trees seemed even taller.

And when Eva raids one of two deep freezes and comes up with vegetables grown in her own garden, lays out bacon and sausage and steak, as well as fruits and jellies and jams, not to mention cakes and pies and puddings hauled in by "the colored folk," and when Enos tops all this off by pouring his guest a glass of homemade peach wine—it is too much, even for a Texan. It is the best of the simple life, that's for sure.

Grenada is one of those towns known for its racial disturbances. TV brought to everyone's livingroom across the country scenes of the local high school being burned to the ground, little black children being pushed and kicked in their attempt to attend an integrated school, and federal troops moving in to maintain law and order. One city official went to prison for stomping into the ground a citation handed him by a federal marshal, while several others were indicted. But it is still rare for a white man to get his just desert in a southern court for his racial crimes. Private schools have mushroomed in Grenada, standing as mute testimonials of the white man's fear that his world will come crashing down upon him if his children are educated with blacks. He can't see that in diluting the quality of education of all children, he is hurting himself, his children, his community and his state. When his sons begin to be turned away from law and medical schools for lack of quality education, it may be too late for him to tally the high cost of racial prejudice. Only about 25% of white children now attend the public schools, a figure that hardly changes from year to year.

But our black brothers in Grenada tell me that conditions have improved remarkably over the past decade. While a Negro still cannot (and for the most part *would* not) move into a white neighborhood, there is "approximate justice" in most areas of life. While some blacks still complain of unevenness in working conditions and opportunities, there is reasonable satisfaction in this regard. Many of the young, educated blacks are siphoned off by other parts of the country where things are more promising. One of our sisters, who is

both daring and intelligent, spoke positively of the improving conditions, but probably said a great deal when she added, “But we know where we stand.” She makes it a part of her own crusade to answer the ads in the paper on houses for sale. Legally, of course, a Negro can buy anything anyone else can, but the whites simply will not negotiate with a black, and so it would take a court battle to pull off a deal, and how many Negroes are that eager to live in Golden Acres? Anyway, our sister likes to call the whites about their houses for sale, and let them sweat it out trying to figure out on the phone whether she is white or black!

Segregation is of course illogical if not insane. People can shop together, work together, and pay bills together, but they cannot study together. As Samuel Golden has put it: “It is sitting that is the problem!” There is a Grenada mother who has taken a job in order to send her older children to a private school, lest they have to be with Negroes. But to do so she has to hire someone to be with her younger children all day. You guessed it. She’s black!

In the heart of all this sits the Fox Street Church of Christ, the main-line, Herald of Truth-supporting congregation that has never had a white family in its membership until the Moores came along. Enos Moore, whose heroes in the faith are Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, neither of which he had ever seen until lately, has been a great blessing to these dear souls, showing them the grace of God in a new dimension and inviting them to be free people in Jesus. And they love and appreciate him and Eva greatly, choosing to be themselves in the Lord rather than to be dictated to by party and racial pressures. Trusting in Enos’ judgment, they allowed me to visit with them for a weekend.

It was in bold contrast to my previous visit to Mississippi. It is amazing how Churches of Christ can be so different, and I’m not talking about color. I have never been treated with greater appreciation and love. They spoiled me with praise, applause, and embraces. One lesson was on God’s great promises that make us partakers of the divine nature. They responded with delight and enthusiasm, one brother saying to my amusement, “What I like about you is that I can understand you!” Another presentation was on what the Holy Spirit does for us today, which brought enthusiastic amens. Some of them told me they liked the way I stay with the Book. In this meeting I had the brothers who sat in the “amen corner” to do a lot of the reading. They were pleased to learn that they had “inner eyes” that the Spirit will open so that we can see deeper into the revealed Word!

Another lesson was on sanctifying Christ in our hearts as Lord, based on I Pet. 3:15, one of the great texts in the teaching of Alexander Campbell, and they readily saw the difference between believing in Jesus as the Christ and enthroning him as Lord of our lives. And since God made him “both Lord and Christ,” they showed a willingness to make him both in their lives. My last discourse was on God’s love as portrayed in the story

of the prodigal son, and they cottoned to my insistence that a man has to be neither white or rich or good for God to go out and meet him and welcome him home.

A brother from another and larger black church in the state heard the lesson on the prodigal son, and he was so impressed with how this story reflects God's love and so convinced that it is just such lessons that his own church needs to hear, that he was gung-ho for me coming to his congregation, and the sooner the better. Someone alerted him that it might spell trouble to have me around and that he had better check it out before inviting me. He was puzzled as to how I could be a controversial figure. "How can anyone cause trouble for a man who preaches the love of God like that?" he was heard to ask.

Well, the dissenters did come—Ouida calls them "the Judaizers"—even to this meeting, though whites rarely visit a black congregation in Mississippi. Nor is the reverse of that encouraged. The Fox street brethren once offered to attend a "white" singing in mass. The white brethren met to deliberate upon this grave matter, and decided that they would rope off an area of the building for the blacks. When even this was objected to, the idea was dropped, and brethren were posted at the door to make sure no Negroes entered. Needless to say that fellowship between blacks and whites does not exactly abound in Mississippi.

And not just Church of Christ folk. When the Methodist conference ruled that its Mississippi churches must integrate, the First Methodist Church in Grenada pulled out of the conference, built another building and now has an independent church. Negroes never came to the old church, but the racists couldn't take any chances. It is just as well that such people, whether theirs or ours, have no serious intentions of going to heaven, for they quite obviously would be most uncomfortable since heaven is composed of "every tribe and language, people and nation" and not likely segregated.

As I said, the dissenters did come, and, bless their hearts, as much as I love them I can hardly understand why they *must* police me on my "far our" views on unity and fellowship, even to the point of being unable to talk about anything else. I had come to encourage my black brothers, and so I chose to speak on God's love and grace, the Spirit's mission in our lives, and the "one hope" of our faith. Our open forum was in this direction, with questions covering everything from the nature of the resurrected body to whether the Holy Spirit actually prays for us. But talk about love and grace and hope and the Holy Spirit was not interesting enough to our white brothers from the other side of the tracks. They couldn't wait to ask me if I *really* believed that people in the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches were Christians! My answers have a way of never being quite satisfactory to such minds, and I seem to improve little with time.

But the blacks are not as undiscerning as some whites might suppose. As one sister put it, commenting on that part of the forum, “I think those brothers were after somebody!” One of the brothers said, “Since they’re always gettin’ on us for supportin’ Herald of Truth, I figgered when they walked in that they was up to no good.”

Herald of Truth is not as popular in Mississippi as it was before John Allen Chalk’s prophetic outcries against racism. In Grenada it is this black church that sponsors it, not the white ones, and so they can make their own announcements. I got a bang out of sitting there before Eva’s country breakfast and listening to Batsell Barrett Baxter’s excellent presentation, followed by a detailed announcement of my meeting!

Herald of Truth has not quite recovered from John Allen’s call for social justice in such presentations as *Are You Worshiping a Criminal God?*, *Hate Thy Neighbor, Hatred is Only Skin Deep*, and *Is Jehovah God a Racist?* Our southern leadership flinched as he insisted that “No church can forbid the water of baptism and the fullness of fellowship to any other human being,” and when he bore down on the “idol of racism.” He deplored our failure to see “the real needs of real men in real suffering and poverty,” and pointed to love as the answer to “the power of personal involvement” that may otherwise be humanly impossible, in his presentation on *Are You a Respecter of Persons?*

The trip to Mississippi was enhanced by a visit from “the professor with the poodle” who drove over to be with us and to meet the Grenada folk. He reports that conditions in his congregation are now improved and that hate and reprisal are about to spend themselves, even though “the Sunday morning massacre” is still vivid. In fact, the assurance of 1 Pet. 3:16 now seems evident: “Keep your conscience clear, so that when you are abused, those who malign your Christian conduct may be put to shame.”

Well, it was a great delight going to Mississippi and building on the foundation of concern and goodwill as laid by Enos and Eva Moore. The experience was unique enough without having brought home with me a rather unusual gift—a gallon, not a quart, but a *gallon* of Enos’ homemade peach wine. Ouida was sampling it before the evening was over and praising it highly. Now if I can just keep her out of it somewhat, we might have some left when you come to see us.—*the Editor*

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THE SPIRIT MAKES US ONE

By Dallas Burdette

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all" (Eph. 4:16).

The key verse to an understanding of this epistle is 1:10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him."

Who are these people whom Paul is exhorting to maintain peace in their unity? The answer: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins" (2:1). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (2:8-10). These are the ones who have been regenerated. These are the ones to whom Paul said, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (2:13-16).

This unity of which Paul speaks is brought about by the Holy Spirit—"the unity of the Spirit" thus fellowship is the domain of the Spirit.

At the heart of *koinonia* is the basic word *koinos,* which means *common.* And the nouns *koinonia* (fellowship) and *koinonos* (a partner), together with the verb *koinoneo* (to share) all bear witness to what we have in common. Christian *koinonia* is our common share in God's great salvation. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians said, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:9). Fellowship is a state in which we are bound together by a common tie. Many brothers do not understand the nature of fellowship, for they think that we have to be of "one mind" in order to be in the fellowship. But "being of one mind" is not essential to being in the fellowship, but being in the fellowship is essential to becoming of one mind. We are in the fellowship because we are in one Person, and because we are in Him we strive to achieve harmony. We have forsaken the unity of the Spirit because we have

forgotten the spirit of unity. Our problem is that we have been in the Spirit's way, rather than in the way of the Spirit.

Carl Ketcherside has pointed out the fallacy of saying that fellowship in Jesus is contingent upon agreement of opinions. "If we come into fellowship by agreement upon opinions, then how many things must we agree upon, and which ones, before fellowship commences? If we must agree upon all views and opinions then no fellowship at all exists today for no two persons are wholly agreed. If we need not agree upon all, who is to determine which ones we may eliminate from the area of agreement without impairing fellowship: if we decide which opinions and views we must agree upon to learns more on some point and changes his mind? Shall he be put out of the fellowship for "growing in knowledge?"

Brothers, my plea to us all is: "Warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified."—*2428 Elsmeade Dr., Montgomery, AI. 36111*

What are all histories but God manifesting himself, shaking down and trampling under foot whatsoever he hath not planted.—*Oliver Cromwell*

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OFFICE NOTES

A lawyer in East Tennessee called me long distance to tell me of a book that is really something else. I have been reading it, and I think you should, every husband that is, and you might want to pass it along to those you know who are not exactly picnics as husbands, or those that are! For only 2.50 we'll send you *Do Yourself A Favor: Love Your Wife.* It will make you think, that's for sure.

Speaking of lawyers, we would like to recommend Norman Anderson's *A Lawyer Among the Theologians* for only 3.95. He reaches beyond sterile theological double-talk to discuss the resurrection, sin, forgiveness, judgement, and what it means to be a Christian in our time.

Ouida and I have now been sending out a paper to our friends for 22 years, and we are now beginning to presume that there are far more years behinq us than before us. Perhaps we have entered into the beginning of the end. The Lord has blessed us with warm and intelligent readers all these years, and we are thankful most of all for those friendships that have been formed through this publication, many of them being people that we have not

yet met. We prize your letters. Some of our tenderest moments are those morsels of information about you and your concerns that we share together in our garage-made-into-an-office. And we find ourselves talking about you, one here another there, as we fold and tie your copy for mailing. So, this is to assure you that your letters are cordially received and even pampered, whether we always get them answered or not. Be certain that every issue of *Restoration Review* that goes forth from this office is our way of saying we love you. Just as our hands touch every copy that goes forth, as if to bless it as well as address it, so our hearts ride with every word from our house to yours.

We have a new supply of *The Baptism Fullness of the Holy Spirit* for only .95 cents, which everyone interested in the baptism of the Holy Spirit should read. John R. W. Stott is something else as a writer. If you missed his *Christ the Controversialist*, you are the loser, but that can be corrected by an outlay of only 2.50.

The labor that goes into *Restoration Review* seems more appropriate with a growing readership. In this regard you are our epistles, for we have no other way of getting the word around. You can send this paper to five of your friends for an entire year for only 5.00. We are always hearing from people who are pleased that someone was so thoughtful as to send them the paper. Why not try it; but, please, don't include the names of people that you *know* to be antagonistic toward what we are trying to do. Ideas that challenge established systems must move naturally and easily among concerned people. We are getting too old for hate mail. But we always send love letters to such dissenters, and I always include such a line as "the one who sent you the paper must love you." But there is really no point in wasting time, money, and effort in sending a paper like this one to people who have no interest at all in a new thought. If you are not sure of their openness, I say send it to them.

The 9th Annual Unity Forum is to be on campus of Scarritt College, July 4-6, in Nashville. Those already confirmed as participants are Bob Fife, Milligan College; Perry Gresham, Bethany College; Thomas Langford, Texas Tech; Frank Allen Dennis, Delta State College (Miss.); Edward Fudge, *Gospel Guardian;* Dr. Max Foster, Arkansas City, KS. The participation of several others pending, including several from the Nashville area. Stanley Hime is chairman and you should write him for advance registration form and program, especially if you want to stay in campus facilities. Address him at 1225 Lone Oak Rd., Nashville 37215 or call him at 615-297-5043.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Michael Hall, writing in the bulletin of Northland Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio, says: "When a preacher stands before the assembly of Christ on Sunday morning and proclaims the truth, he is not doing *primarily* the work of an evangelist *in that task.* The work of an evangelist is *going to people* who are not converted and evangelizing them. That's the preacher's task!"

One of our preachers, Clyde Thompson, was once a convicted murderer and spent years in the penitentiary. He is now a minister of the Word to prisoners in Texas correctional institutions. In the bulletin of the Church of Christ, Mabank, Texas, who helps to support his work, he reports over 600 immersions. He counsels with these men, and there are assemblies for the breaking of bread in the Huntsville prison and at several of the prison farms.

One significant congregation among Christian Churches is Mount Carmel in Decatur, Ga., which has a million dollar auditorium and Sunday School facilities for 3,000. It may well be the most impressive of the Independent congregations, with a professional staff of five and offerings that sometimes reach as high as $100,000 a Sunday. They have upwards of 2,000 at morning assembly and something like half that for evening. The senior minister has long practiced visiting each family every month, which proves to be no small task. The youth program is something else, with as many as 500 present for their Sunday evening meeting, and they have a big red barn for raps and sports. The church is strongly Bible-study centered, with classes running two hours both Sunday morn and eve, with all sorts of special classes through the week.

A Roman Catholic nun, serving as a campus minister at Boston University, was fired by her superior for saying mass. She claimed innocence of violating the sanctity of priesthood, which only men may enter, in that she omitted "the words of consecration." One priest, serving with her on the same campus, took her side, insisting that the celibate, male tradition is an outrage that should be changed. For those of our background, what the nun did would be roughly equivalent to a woman presiding at the Lord's Supper in a Church of Christ, or perhaps baptizing. Would that unglue you?

Also out of the Roman Catholic world comes the story of a half-million dollar home for the archbishop of Washington D. C. The archbishop purchased the home and was preparing to make it his residence when "all hell broke loose" in the form of protests. Leading the protest was a Paulist priest, who has been trying to get the Washington diocese to commit ten million annually to "the poorest of God's poor" in D. C. He pointed out that the $525,000 home for the archbishop was more money than the church was now giving to the poor, and so he staged a hunger strike, vowing to fast until the archbishop decided to live in humbler circumstances. The priest lived on water only for 23 days, at which time the archbishop capitulated, announcing that he would remain at the rectory and the new

residence would be sold. The priest lost 40 pounds, but does not yet have his 10 million for the poor.

Eternity recently presented a study on the modern versions, an evaluation of nine translations now widely used, made by eight "conservative" scholars. Highest marks go to the *Revised Standard Version*, with lowest marks going to *The Living Bible*. This is remarkable in view of the fact that for years the *Revised Standard* was criticized as the work of modernists, with some charging that it was a calculated effort to destroy faith. F. F. Bruce, one of the evaluators, says of it: "It keeps as close to the original as fidelity to modern English idiom will permit. It has gone far to replace the KJV as the best 'all purpose' English version," while Robert H. Mounce says it is "The best translation in the English language for general use." On the other hand, the new Bibles out of Grand Rapids, the publication center for evangelicalism, do not fare so well, even when judged by evangelicals. Of *The Living Bible* Prof. Bruce struggles to say only "A paraphrase, serving mainly as a simplified Bible for children," while Mounce says flatly "In terms of its fidelity to the Greek text, it is the poorest of the English translations." Even the very newest *New International*, the pride of Grand Rapids and perhaps justly so, doesn't begin to score like the RSV. Bruce commends it highly enough, but Mounce says "Somewhat uneven in its attempts to modernize. A number of felicitous phrases." All this confirms what I said 20 years ago, in my earlier *Bible Talk*, in support of the RSV, at a time when it was an unpopular course, with some of our folk here and there holding public burnings of that version. I still say it is better to let the "modernists" do our Bible translating. All they have at stake is their scholarship!

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